

11-26-1996

Art departs from abstract

Karen A. Davis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/bss>

Recommended Citation

Davis, Karen A., "Art departs from abstract" (1996). *Broad Street Studio*. 3.
<https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/bss/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Youth Program at Digital Commons @ RIC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Broad Street Studio by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ RIC. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@ric.edu.

FOOD: Holiday donations grow; need grows, too **A-1** ■ **HOSPITAL:** Roger Williams trustees approve sale **B-1**

METRO EDITION

SECTION

C

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1996

SERVING PROVIDENCE AND EAST PROVIDENCE

PROVIDENCE



IN FLIGHT: Deb Torres, left, and Reyna Wooddrops practice a balancing act while artist Erminio Pinque works with students on a mural, below.

Art departs from abstract

■ The Youth Arts Conference was a hands-on experience in creativity for 130 Roger Williams Middle School students.

By **KAREN A. DAVIS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PROVIDENCE

Last Thursday when artist Erminio Pinque came to his class and instructed him to freely scribble on a sheet of paper, then pass it to the student beside him, 12-year-old Icidro Vega figured he was in for a less than stirring experience.

Instead, what the seventh-grade Roger Williams Middle School student experienced were the creative beginnings of a colorful, 4-foot-by-11-foot mural that yesterday brightened AS220 cafe and commanded stares from classmates.

Icidro and a dozen fellow students had spent last Thursday drawing abstract art on several pieces of notebook paper. Yesterday, under Pinque's direction, they

transferred the colorful creations onto the wall-sized mural.

"I like it," Icidro said, as he stood back to watch classmates outline the eyes and ears of what turned out to be abstract faces.

Pinque said he started with the scribbling exercise to get the students to loosen up. And while he had envisioned the class making a mural with an urban industrial theme, it was the students who came up with the final product — a work illustrating abstract identities.

When all was said and done, Icidro



said, "it was a fun way to learn about art."

About 130 seventh-grade Roger Williams students from art classes and a special education class were chosen to participate in the Youth Arts Conference for just that reason. A crucial component of the conference

was having the artists spend a day in the classroom and having the students spend a day at the art studios.

The program — paid for by the Rhode Island Council for the Arts, Very Special Arts Rhode Island and Rhode Island Hospital Trust Bank — aims to introduce students to the world of professional art

Turn to **ART**, Page C 3

METRO EDITION

Art

Continued from Page C 1

and teach them ways in which artists and their communities can work together. It was modeled after a pilot program held last year at Sackett Elementary School.

Umberto Crenca, director of AS220, which co-sponsored the program with Very Special Arts Rhode Island, said that from his experience, bringing students to art studios has an "indelible impact" on their vision of art. The impact can be just as great for an artist who spends time teaching students what they do, Crenca said.

Both sides are learning a process, said Jeannine Chartier, executive director of Very Special Arts.

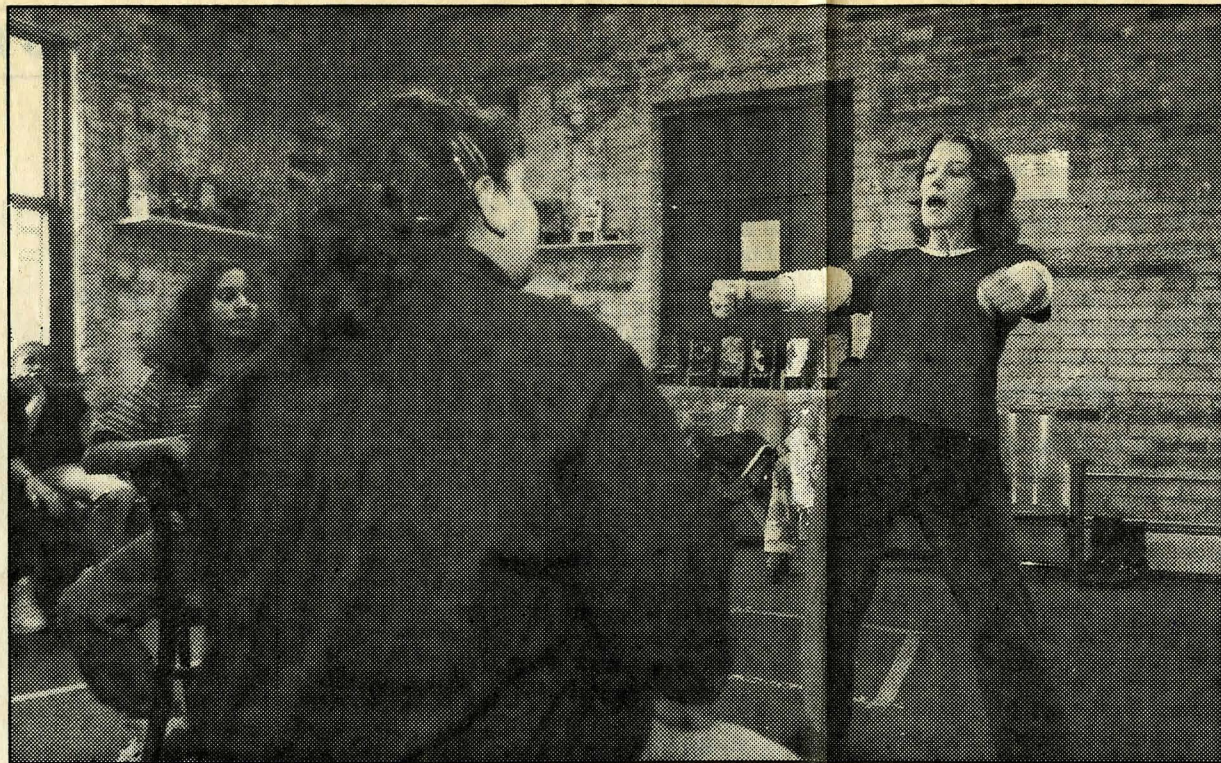
"It's more than just going on a field trip," Chartier said. "It's about that hands-on experience. By tapping their imagination, the students are encouraged to think and learn and work together; it broadens their horizons as far as what the possibilities are."

Lessons to apply

Pat Huntington, an art teacher at Roger Williams, said she hopes students will learn skills they can apply to academic study and interpersonal relationships.

"Being able to work closely with artists builds their self-confidence, especially among our special needs kids," she said. "They're learning to take risks and try things that they've never tried before."

In a room upstairs from the mural painters, in the gallery of



IN THE MOVE: Dance teacher Deb Larsen illustrates movement for Roger Williams Middle School students during an arts conference yesterday at AS220 on Empire Street in Providence.

dancer Deb Larsen, a new form of expression was shown to another group of students.

"Focus! Focus!" Larsen shouted over the din of chattering voices. As one team of five classmates sat on the sidelines, another group of five clung to chairs and heeded Larsen's instructions to find creative poses. Each group member created a pose and the rest were instructed to emulate, then memorize it by number.

"(In dancing) nothing is done without a certain amount of structure and order," Larsen admonished a playful pupil, after calling out numbers and watching for the appropriate pose. "Concentrate."

Down the hall, a local artist mixed voices and sounds collected at the school last week with a hi-tech sound board to create a youthful audiotape; hip-hop music was blended in the background to give the tape a commercial appeal.

The work-in-progress won rave reviews from aspiring musicians.

Other groups included a class of photographers, who shot film last week, then gathered in the AS220 dark room to develop their photos and arrange them into a collage; a group who studied, drew and painted butterflies; a group that collectively wrote a short story, then worked together to illustrate it; a group of computer artists and a group of sculptors. Another group is recycling milk cartons, plastics and

bottles into abstract masks.

At the end of the day, each group presented their works of art to their classmates.

Chartier said the mural and masks will be displayed at the school and saved for a community presentation.

Ricardo Vargas, 13, who worked with the group of illustrators, said he enjoyed the program. He said he learned to work with a team of writers — each author contributed one sentence to the story, then passed it on to a teammate — and he learned techniques for improving his drawing.

Improved attention span

He plans to employ those skills when he pursues his dream of becoming an architect.

Clement Harris, a history teacher who accompanied the students to AS220 yesterday, said he sees the difference in the students' level of attention.

"I can see the enthusiasm," he said, while supervising the lunch room. "This may seem like noise to you, but this is their way of releasing energy."

Harris said the program "allows the kids to see that art work can (be) and is appreciated."

"We're a diverse group, and now we know that there are diverse forms of art," he said. They "no longer laugh at art that is different."

Harris said the lesson is one that all students in all communities could learn from. Lack of appreciation of art is an affliction of both urban and suburban students, he said.

Chartier said her goal is to expand the program to other schools next year.

Journal-Bulletin/STEVE SZYDLOWSKI